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LITHUANIAN NAMES

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In ancient times the Lithuanians like other peoples had only a single name, no last name or family name being necessary. These names consisted of two stems and may have had a noble, majestic meaning, e.g., Taut-ginas 'defender of the nation, people' (tauta 'nation, people,' -*ginas* 'defending, defender,' cf. *ginti* 'to defend'), *Vis-valdas* 'ruling everything' (*Vis*-as 'all, everything' -*valdas* 'ruling, governing,' cf. *valdyti* 'to rule, to govern'), *Daug-vilas* 'who hopes much' (daug 'much, many,' vilas 'hoping, hopeful,' cf. *viltis* 'to hope'). Sometimes even the order of the roots was reversed so that in addition to a form such as Taut-ginas one could also have *Gin-tautas*.

Since such long names were unsuitable for everyday conversation, they were soon shortened, e.g., *Algis* for *Algirdas* and *Geidas* for *Ceid-vilas*. These were more suitable in the surroundings of the family and took on a meaning of endearment or a diminutive meaning. Names were also supplied with suffixes, usually diminutives or suffixes denoting belonging, e.g., *Alg-elis*, *Kęst-utis*, *Taut-enis*.

Family names arose quite slowly and in Vytautas' time (1392-1430) they still were not used. Sometimes if it was necessary to single out one person from the rest, the father's or the brother's name was added, e.g., *Kantibutas Dravenio sūnus* 'Kantibutas, son of Dravenis,' or *Jovirdas Lašuko sūnus arba Dravenio brolis* 'Jovirdas, son of Lašukas or brother of Dravenis' (*sūnus* = son; *brolis* = brother).

With the introduction of Christianity Lithuanians were christened with the name of some saint or other. Since they already had some folk name, from that time they came to have two names, but in everyday language the Christian names were not immediately adopted and from the time of the introduction of Christianity in official documents the two names were used, e.g., (in Latin) *Michael alias Minegal* (*Minigaila* — 1387), *Gregorius alias Gedigold* (*Gedigaudas* — 1411). Sometimes the word *alias* was omitted, e.g., *Joannes Gosztowdo* (for Lithuanian Jonas Goštautas) and it might look as though there was a first name followed by a family name, but this was not, indeed, the case.

The beginning of the use of family names in Lithuania dates from the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century. At first they were used only by the nobility, ordinary people doing without them. In addition, they appeared first in the cities and only later in the villages. The most intensive formation of family names came during the 16th and 17th centuries, particularly among the privileged classes of society. Ordinary people, at least in the villages here and there did not have last names until the end of the 18th century, and in such cases in official documents their village of origin was usually noted, e.g., *Mikolajunas ex villa Narbuty* (*Mikolajūnas* from the village of Narbuty (Norbutai), 1742).

It was only when official registration became necessary and the system of passports was instituted that people began to use the first and family name in a systematic fashion. If there was no official family name, frequently the nickname was used and at this period nicknames were very popular. This explains the origin of many Lithuanian names, e.g., *Réksnys* ('shouter, bawler,' cf. *rékti* 'to shout, to cry'), *Beragis* ('hornless,' cf. *be* 'without' and *ragas* 'horn'), *Aukštakojis* ('longlegged,' cf. *aukštas* 'tall, high' and *koja* 'leg'), etc. For all practical purposes the formation of last names was finished in Lithuania by the end of the 18th century. From that time on everyone was relatively consistently named with a first and family name in official documents. In addition to names which have their origin in old folk names and nicknames some come from patronymics, i.e., a name derived from the father's name by means of a suffix, usually -*aitis*, but also -*ūnas*, -*onis*, -*ėnas*, -*ynas*, etc. Thus the sons of *Gintautas* are called *Gintautaitis*, plural *Gintautaičiai*, the sons of *Geidvilas* are called *Geidvilaitis*, plural *Geidvilaičiai*, the sons of Antanas are called *Antanaitis*, plural *Antanaičiai*. For a long time these were true patronymics, i.e., Peter the son of Antanas would be called *Petras Antanaitis*, but Peter's son John would be called Jonas *Petraitis*. Gradually the name became fixed and did not change from generation to generation.

With the name *Jonas* 'John' we find such etymological patronymics as *Joniūnas*, *Jononis*, *Jonėnas*, *Jonynas*, etc. Since at the time of the formation of last names in Lithuania the official language of the government was the Slavic chancellery language (a variety of Belorussian or White Russian) and then later, Polish, frequently the last name was written with Slavic patronymic suffixes. For example, *Jonas Petraitis* was written as *Jan Petrovič*. Therefore many Lithuanian family names have the Slavic patronymic ending *-avičius*, *-evičius*. Later when Polish became the official language the endings *-owski*, *-inski* and *-icki* were used which in the course of time were Lithuanianized into *-auskas*, *-inskas* and *-ickas* respectively, e.g., *Petrauskas*, *Žilinskas*, *Judickas*, etc. In addition, both patronymics and family names were derived from the Slavic diminutives and terms of endearment, e.g., *Jankaitis*, *Jankūnas*, *Jasaitis*, *Jasiūnas*, *Jasonis*, *Jasėnas*, *Jasiulis*, *Jaskutis*, *Jaskūnas*, *Ivonaitis*, *Ivašaitis*, *Ivaškaitis* based on such Polish or Belorussian forms of the name 'John' as *Janka*, *Jaś*, *Jaśka*, *Ivan*, *Ivaś*, *Ivaška*. Note also the forms with the Slavic suffixes such as *Jankevičius*, *Jankauskas*, *Jasevičius*, *Jasinskas*, *Jaskevičius*, *Ivanauskas*, *Ivanavičius*, *Ivašauskas*, *Ivaškevičius*, etc.

With the Polonization of the Lithuanian nobility there came a conscious effort to Polonize Lithuanian personal names, to translate them into Polish or to give a Lithuanian a Polish name. Sometimes even a Lithuanian would try to change his own name by adding a 'noble' *-ski*, so that his lower origin could be hidden thereby.

Because of all of these reasons in the course of time true Lithuanian personal names fell into a decline. Many Lithuanians have names which have been changed or Polonized and the names have undergone more foreign influence than the Lithuanian language itself. (See Zinkevičius, 1977, 34-37.)

But the old original Lithuanian names make a fascinating study. Curiously enough, even though many of them contain two roots, each one of which is etymologically clear, the meaning of the compound is frequently most unclear, or rather, it is susceptible of several interpretations.

Along with the native Lithuanian two-stem names, in the 20th century it has been popular to take old names from other Baltic nations, the Old Prussians and the Latvians, e.g., *Alvydas* and *Nomedas* (both of which come from Old Prussian) and *Tolvaldis* which is a Lithuanianized version of Latvian *Talivaldis* (Latvian *tali* 'distant,' Latvian *valdit* 'to rule, to administer'). Names are also taken from other nationalities, e.g., *Artūras* from Celtic *Arthur* (cf. Old Irish *art* 'bear'), *Evaldas* from German *Ewald* (cf. Old High German *ewa* 'law' and *walran* 'to administer'), *Ingeborga* from Scandinavian *Ingeborg*, *Violeta* from either Italian *Violetta* or French *Violette*, a name made popular by Verdi's opera *La Traviata*, and many other such names.

Another popular source of modern Lithuanian names is the supply of mythological figures from the ancient Lithuanian past: *Austėja* from the name of the ancient Lithuanian goddess of the bees, possibly derived from *austi* 'to weave,' cf. the expression *austi korius* 'to weave honeycombs;' *Jūratė* from the name of an old Lithuanian mythological sea creature, cf. Lithuanian *jūra* 'sea'; *Laima* from the name of the ancient Baltic goddess of luck or fortune; *Žemyna* from the name of the ancient Lithuanian goddess of earth and fertility, cf. Lithuanian *žemė* 'land, earth' plus the suffix *-yna*. In addition, names of imaginary mythological goddesses, popularized by romantic historians, e.g., *Milda*, an imaginary goddess of love, derived from *melsti*, 3rd singular present *meldžia*, which originally meant 'to make soft or smooth,' cf. English *mild*; or *Nijolė* the name of the imaginary wife of *Pykuolis*, god of the underworld.

Names are also taken from literary sources, e.g., *Grażina*, the heroine of Adam Mickiewicz's poem of the same name, derived from *graži* 'beautiful' plus the suffix *-ina*, or the names *Kunotas* and *Šarūnas* found in the work of Vincas Krėvė.

Place names can also be used for the creation of personal names, e.g., *Deimena*, a village in East Prussia; *Gailantas*, the name of a lake; *Neringa* from the name of the Curonian isthmus; *Venta*, the name of a lake. Names of ancient Baltic tribes are also encountered, e.g., *Aistis* (masculine), *Aistė* (feminine), the name of the Aistians; *Jotvingas* (masculine), *Jotvingė* (feminine), the name of the Old Prussian tribe Yatvingians (Jatwingians), *Notangas* (masculine), *Notangė* (feminine), the name of an Old Prussian tribe, the Natangians.

Some names have been fashioned by linguists, e.g., the feminine versions of *Algirdas*, *Kęstutis*, *Skirgaila* and *Vytautas* which are respectively *Algirdė*, *Kęstutė*, *Skirgailė* and *Vytautė*. Although such names are not historically attested they could have existed, because it is known that feminine names were derived from masculine names by changing the ending and sometimes the position of the stress. Another means of creating new names is to switch the order of the elements of old names, e.g., from *Tavilas* and *Tautimilas* one can have *Vikaras* and *Miltautas*. Since the procedure is ancient, such names might have existed also. (The root *tar-* is derived from *tarti* 'to say; to suppose;' the root *vil-* is from *viltis* 'to hope;' the root *mil-* is from *[pa-]milti* 'to fall in love' and *taut-* from *tauta* 'folk, people, nation.')

Some names were invented at the beginning of the 20th century by the parents of the newborn children. Such names were particularly for girls, since there was a dearth of names for them in historical sources. Note, for example *Audronė* (from *audra* 'storm' plus the suffix *-onė*), *Dainė* (from *daina* 'song'), *Rytė* from *rytas* 'morning.' Innovations among boys' names include *Arūnas* (from *aras* 'eagle plus the suffix *-ūnas*), and *Audrius* (from *audra* 'storm'). Sometimes names have been created as loan translations from foreign languages, e.g., *Auksė* from Latin *Aurelia* (the Lithuanian name is derived from Lithuanian *auksas* 'gold/ whereas the Latin name is derived from Latin *aurum* 'gold' — the Lithuanian and Latin words are thought to be cognate, both deriving from a Proto-Indo-European root **aus-* 'gold'). One also encounters Lithuanian *Danguolė* translated from Latin *Coelestina* (cf. English *Celeste*). Lithuanian *dangus* and Latin *caelum* (also *coelum*) both

mean 'sky, heavens.' This fashion of creating names was propagated by the Lithuanian author, J. Tumas-Vaižgantas. (See Kuzavinis and Savukynas, 1971, 42-48.).

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